

ABEJA



2005 MERLOT

HARVEST DATES: September 15, 2005 – September 28, 2005 (Cabernet Franc: October 6, 2005)

VARIETAL COMPOSITION: 95% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Franc

VINEYARD SOURCES: Sagemoor Bacchus, Dionysus, & Wallulla; Cabernet Franc: Weinbau

APPELLATION: Columbia Valley

OAK COMPOSITION: 90% French, medium toast; ; 5% Central European, 5% American
60% new, 40% one & two year old

BARREL AGING: 16 months

CHEMISTRY: Alc. 14.6%, pH 3.74, TA .53 g/100ml

BOTTLING DATE: March 9, 2007

RELEASE DATE: November 1, 2007

OPTIMUM TIME FOR CONSUMPTION: Through 2019

A number of elements came together in this vintage to make it one of the best we've seen in some time. The stage was set for the 2005 growing season the autumn prior with a period of extended mild temperatures. Winter offered conditions for complete dormancy, but with no damaging temperature extremes. The growing season that followed was filled with long warm days and cool nights. This unfolded into a really nice, warm September right on through harvest. Finally, the typical end-of-October frost held off until the middle of November. The result of such excellent growing conditions is a wine with rich complexity, roundness, beautiful fruit characters, and superb balance. This Merlot has all of these characteristics in abundance.

This is an easy wine to write about, with its brilliant dark red color that lets you know it is for real. Its fruitful, pretty, brambly nose filled with aromas of black raspberry, mountain blackberry, and dried cherry is woven with vanillin and light shaved chocolate. The mouth follows through with these flavors and traces of cassis and black currant. All of these characters are elevated by a brightness and accented with delicate spice. The final impression is long-lasting and completed by rich, silky tannins. This is a stunning example of a varietal that should not be overlooked, especially when grown on the finer sites in Washington State.

A simply prepared grilled burger and fresh roasted vegetables would perfectly complement the lushness of this wine, or try it with a spring lamb chop and couscous.

For the musical accompaniment, I would recommend Dire Straits' *Espresso Love* and Mark Knoffler's *Late on the Rent*. If you are in an 80's mood, try Romeo Void's *A Girl in Trouble* and Re-flex's *The Politics of Dancing*.

John Abbott—*Winemaker*